

# High Point

High Point, located in West Seattle and long one of Seattle's most diverse neighborhoods, is now one of the most significant redevelopment opportunities in the city's history. Its transformation is well underway.

The 120-acre High Point community is being revitalized as a mixed-income housing development based on New Urbanist planning principles, with 34 blocks of new streets, an innovative natural drainage system, sidewalks, parks and open space. As the community develops, its views of Puget Sound and Mount Rainier, mix of housing choices, and convenient commercial and community services will make it a desirable new neighborhood for all of Seattle's residents.



## HISTORY



Constructed in 1942 to house government workers during WWII, High Point has long offered affordable living at the edge of downtown.



In 1952, the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) took ownership, converting the 716 units to much-needed affordable housing.

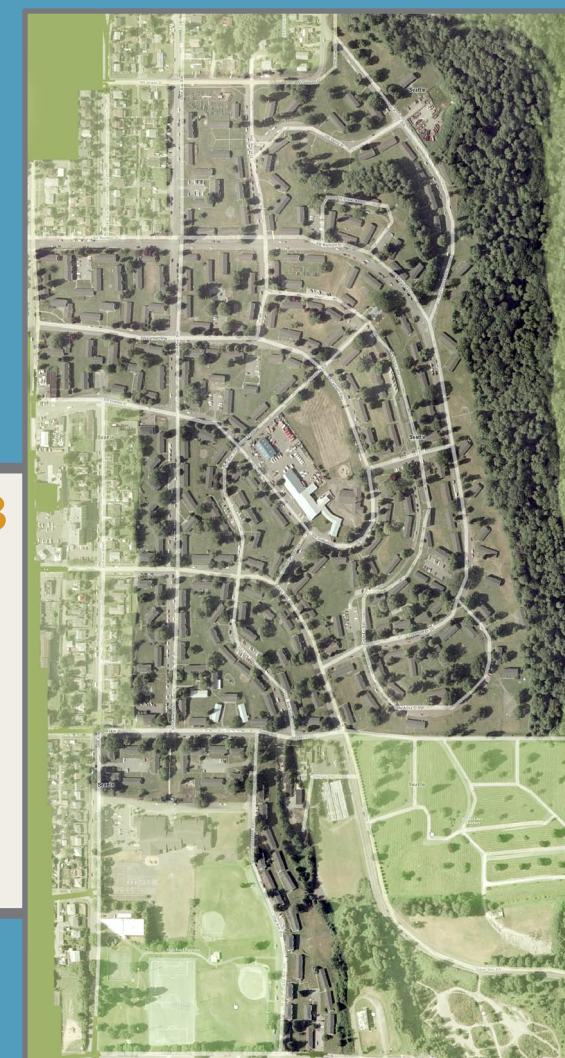


By the 1990s, High Point was in dire need of redevelopment and upgrading. Outdated buildings, inadequate transit access for residents, and untended open spaces had isolated the community from the rest of West Seattle.

What captured the imagination of community members, planners and funders was the idea of completely redesigning the site to knit it back into the surrounding neighborhood. Both local and federal funds (Hope VI) were needed, along with private investment, to realize this big idea—a wholly new vision of the High Point community.



**1942**  
Rendering of High Point as WWII worker housing.



**2003**  
High Point before recent redevelopment.



# COMMUNITY

## Placemaking

From the start, High Point residents and the greater neighborhood were engaged with Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) and the City in the community placemaking process.

Through many meetings and collaborative design workshops, the residents and planners kept their eyes on making High Point a home for children and people of all ages and cultures. Placemaking is an ongoing process, and programs focused on afterschool activities, daycare, healthcare and community gardening will keep residents engaged as neighborhood stewards.

► Child's drawing of their future community.



► Residents were polled as to their house design preferences.



▲ Residents move back into newly completed homes, Summer 2005.

## Partnerships

From early on, SHA embarked on a unique partnership with area residents and employees from many different agencies to assemble solid funding plans, legislation packages and planning documents, all with the common vision of a new High Point. SHA continues to serve a central role on the redevelopment project as owner, master plan developer, manager of financing and operations, and leader of all collaborative efforts at High Point.

West Seattle community members, SHA staff and the City have been working on High Point as a collaborative endeavor since 1999. Mithūn, SvR Design and Nakano Associates have served as design consultants throughout the redevelopment process on site planning and building development.

2004  
FEB  
12



Phase I streets and houses are being removed.  
Straw is laid down for erosion control.  
Large trees are being left in place with protective fences.  
New health clinic and public library are opening.

2004  
SEPT  
17



Preparation for the porous pavement block is underway.  
Market Garden P-Patch is taking its new shape.  
First block of homes are under construction; second block gets its foundations.

# PUBLIC SPACES

**Civic Buildings** and spaces help knit together the new mixed-income community with the neighborhood. High Point's new civic projects include:

- a library with community meeting room
- a medical & dental clinic
- an on-site neighborhood center
- an expanded public community center
- local retail services

► High Point's Seattle Public Library



**Open Space** also encourages a feeling of community and brings people together. Special attention has been paid to good design, attractive amenities and active use in these spaces. Highlights include:

- gathering space in Central Commons Park
- benches & mailbox shelters in pocket parks
- Market Garden P-Patch
- connection to Longfellow Creek Legacy Trail

◀ The Market Garden P-Patch fence, a community art project guided by Pomegranate Center



▲ High Point Community Center

◀ Market Garden P-Patch in bloom

▼ High Point Dental and Medical Clinic





# PLANNING

## How Did We Get Here?

The redevelopment of High Point is an ambitious and complex project, calling for:

- A Healthy Environment
- An Engaged Community
- Quality Design

In the late 1990s, the City and Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) formed a working relationship on High Point, committing to policy innovation, permit streamlining and important civic investments. The City’s Design Commission and the West Seattle Design Review Board conducted joint reviews of the Master Plan and gave their support for it to serve as the framework for phased development of the streets, open space and future housing.

In 1999, the Mayor proposed inclusion of a Delridge/High Point Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy in the City’s block grant program. City Council Resolution 29891 authorized this proposal, and recognized SHA’s redevelopment project for High Point. The resolution articulated the new High Point vision:

***“High Point envisions itself as a vibrant, mixed-income community where mutual respect, education, work and a safe environment for families form its central values. High Point will attract families and businesses with well-designed, mixed-income housing, revitalized commercial nodes, and integrated low-income housing in the West Seattle community.”***

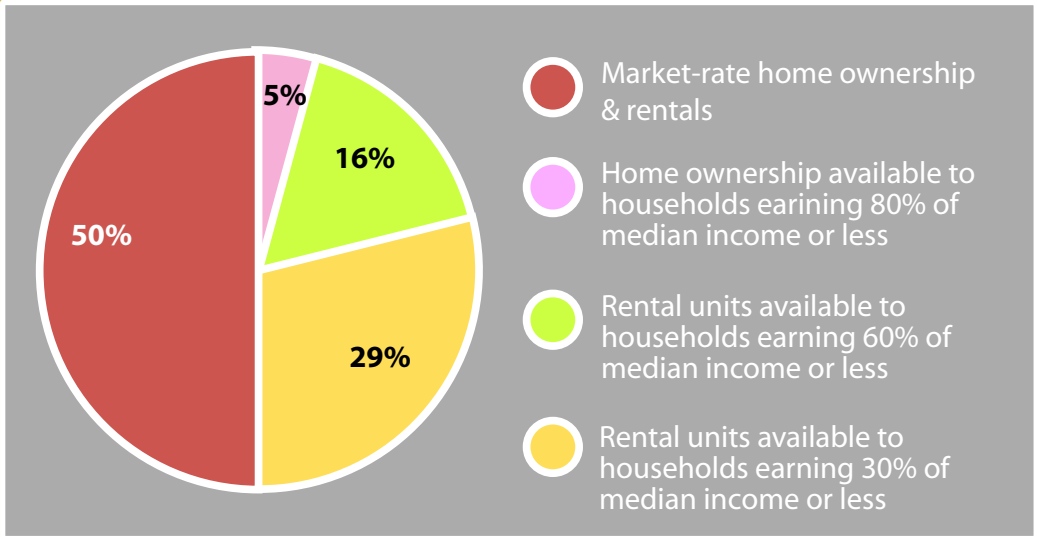
City of Seattle resolution 29891

2004  
SEPT  
24



Retention pond is being lined.  
Groundwork for swales is completed.  
New road system is established.

## 1,600 Mixed-Income Households



SHA made an important pledge to replace each of the existing 716 public housing units as High Point redevelops. All units will be available for at least 40 years to households earning no more than 30 percent of the Seattle median income. Of the 716 total units of low-income housing that will be replaced, 466 will be at High Point, and the remaining 250 units will be located elsewhere in Seattle.



▲ Early Community Meetings

## Key strategies identified in the resolution include:

- developing neighborhood commercial nodes as “urban villages”
- preserving, integrating and enhancing existing natural areas
- improving housing conditions
- promoting economic development opportunities
- building upon population diversity
- developing neighborhood capacity
- revitalizing High Point as a mixed-income development



## Physical Design

SHA developed a Master Plan in 2001 for High Point’s redevelopment. The Master Plan includes features that can already be seen in the new High Point, such as:

- a new eco-friendly street grid and natural drainage system
- a network of pedestrian and open space connections
- demonstration programs showcasing new building technology

But housing remains the centerpiece of the plan—with more than 400 units already built and plans to accommodate nearly 1,600 mixed-income households by 2009.



# GREEN

## Natural Drainage System

High Point is located in the Longfellow Creek Watershed, home of one of Seattle’s salmon-bearing creeks. Since the High Point community occupies nearly 10 percent of the watershed, it has a significant impact on the water quality of Longfellow Creek. Incorporating a “natural drainage” system into the new community offered an unprecedented opportunity to reduce stormwater runoff to Longfellow Creek, dramatically improving its water quality, flows and habitat.

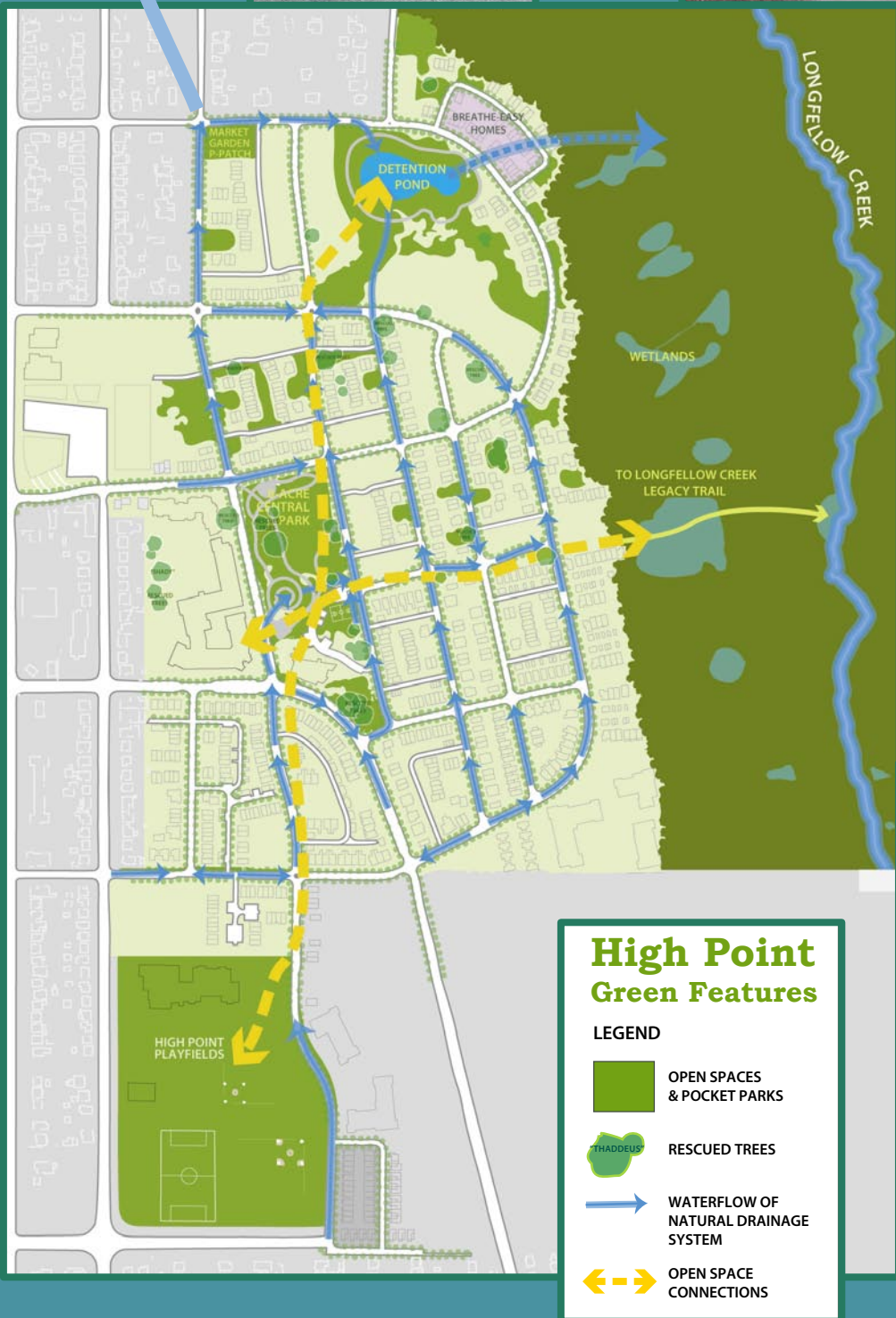
### Permeable Surfaces

High Point showcases the first “porous pavement” street in Washington and serves as a testing ground for its use elsewhere. Porous pavement sidewalks and gravel-paved driveways are employed at key sites to help reduce paved or impervious surfaces and infiltrate stormwater. High Point will have only 60 percent impervious areas. This is a much lower percentage than most new developments, and much better for the environment.

▼ Washington’s first porous pavement street.



◀ After a good rain, the vegetated swales allows the rainwater to percolate through the soil before entering the storm drains.



▲ A large retention pond holds the influx of stormwater until released to the creek at a more natural pace.



▲ Longfellow Creek, stretching 4 miles long, is one of Seattle’s five major creeks, and is part of Mayor Nickels’ Restore Our Waters Initiative.

“Site design at the parcel level is important to facilitate a natural approach to site drainage.”

Peg Staeheli, SvR Design Company

2005  
MAR  
10



Breathe-Easy Homes are nearly completed.  
Two blocks of rental housing are ready for landscaping.  
Groundwork for pocket parks is underway.  
Swales are ready for their plantings.

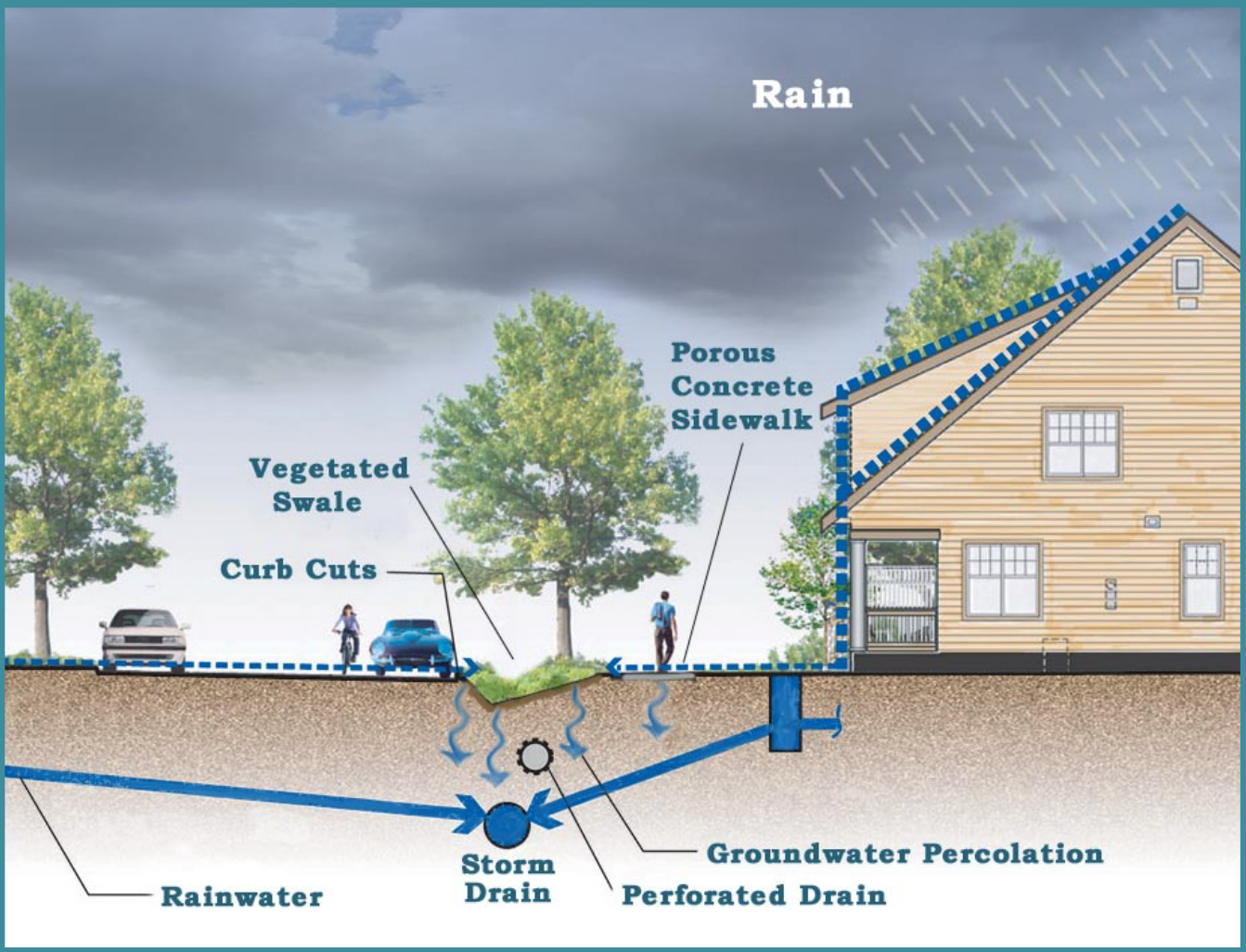
2005  
MAY  
12



Pocket parks are planted.  
Many houses are painted.  
Swales are functioning.

### Swales

High Point’s natural drainage system includes a unique network of environmentally friendly “swales” alongside every street in the new community. The swales appear as extra wide planting strips, either flat or sloped, which capture, slow and filter stormwater runoff from adjacent houses and roadways.



Vegetated swales make good use of low-care native plants.

### Artworks

Bruce Myers, the artist commissioned for the High Point project, has captured crucial elements of the natural drainage system through a series of artworks.

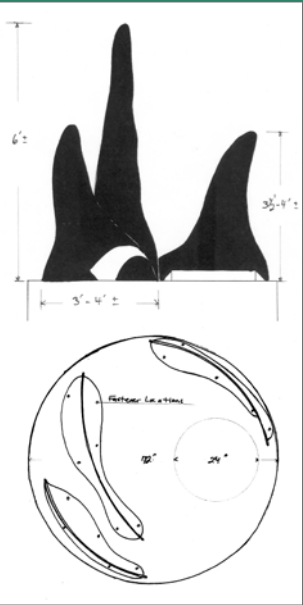


▲ Splash blocks depicting salmon swimming upstream



◀ Pavement scored with raindrop patterns.

- Grates with maple leaf relief.
- Story poles with images taken from the watershed.



▲ Sculpture of orcas for main stormwater detention pond.



# CONSTRUCTION

## Building Practices

By building a mixed-income community, Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) was able to generate more income from market-rate homes to invest in high quality, healthy homes for all of the residents. All of the homes will be Built Green™ certified, which means they are healthier for people and better for the environment.

Built Green™ is a green building program developed by the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish counties. Builders and homeowners can use Built Green™ as a checklist to improve the economic, environmental and health performance of their homes.

Some of the Built Green™ features include:

- ☑ front porches that strengthen a sense of community
- ☑ native plants in landscape that reduce irrigation water use and provide habitat for local wildlife
- ☑ healthier indoor environments for residents with increased ventilation, low-emitting materials, and controls for potential pollutants
- ☑ “deconstruction” of 22 homes in order to recycle the building materials
- ☑ reuse of concrete and land-clearing debris and conservation of topsoils
- ☑ tree preservation
- ☑ use of biodiesel fuel in construction vehicles
- ☑ energy-efficient design and water conserving elements, such as high-efficiency heaters, airtight drywall construction, Energy Star® appliances, front-loading washing machines and tankless hot water heaters

► The City of Seattle launched the Built Green™ Design Competition in 2003 to encourage builders to embrace Built Green™. High Point was one of the seven projects that won an award as a healthier, environmentally friendly community. With High Point’s 1,600 Built Green™ homes coming on the market, Seattle will have one of the largest concentrations of green homes in the nation.



Deconstruction of homes yielding high quality lumber.



◀ Vehicles running on biodiesel.



Rendering of High Point’s homes. Source: Mithūn

2005  
JUN  
7



Senior housing is nearly completed.

2005  
AUG  
18



Swales and pocket parks are already green.  
Temporary ponds are being drained into the nearly completed retention pond.  
Preserved topsoil is being moved into the new commons park.

## Breathe-Easy Homes

With a near-epidemic of childhood and adult asthma, especially within low-income families, High Point became the first community in the country to offer *Breathe-Easy Homes*. Recognizing that poor indoor environmental air quality is a key factor in the increase in asthma, SHA partnered with the Neighborhood House, University of Washington, King County Health Department and the American Lung Association of Washington to develop the *Breathe-Easy Homes* program. This educational program includes life-style changes, design and construction strategies, and a monitoring program.

The homes were built to improve air quality and minimize airborne particles, organisms and pollutants through:

- air filtration systems
- hydronic heating
- easy to clean surfaces, such as linoleum flooring and window blinds
- low-VOC paints, finishes and cabinetry
- airtight wall construction, insulated windows and insulated foundations
- HEPA filter vacuum cleaners

123 mature trees were protected by fences during construction.



◀ False cypress was valued at \$11,107.  
▼ Tree nicknamed “Big Papa.”▼



▼ New residents enjoying their front porch.





# BENCHMARKS

## A Decade in Development

**1997** • Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) completes High Point Garden Community Revitalization Plan

**1999** • City approves Resolution 29891, including Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies for Delridge/High Point

**2000** • SHA receives \$35 million in seed money for redevelopment from federal government from Housing and Urban Development's HOPE VI funding program

**2001** • High Point Housing Master Plan completed for integrated site drainage, open space, housing and civic buildings • Construction work begins on City funded civic structures, including library and community center expansion

**2002** • SHA and City of Seattle sign Memorandum of Agreement in November to partner on innovative natural drainage approach at High Point to help protect Longfellow Creek Watershed • Tree protection program established

**2003** • Neighborhood clinic and nearby community center expansion open • Site Plan receives Washington Landscape Planning Award



### Phase I:

**2004** • Phase I—groundbreaking on High Point housing • High Point Neighborhood Library opens, funded by *Libraries for All* Levy

**2005** • Early site work completed: organic market garden, natural drainage systems, underground utilities, new streets (including state's first demonstration porous pavement street), and community open spaces • First homes ready for occupancy • Awarded Seattle Built Green™ Communities Award

**2006** • 419 low-income rental and senior units and nearly 240 homeowner units completed in Phase I • High Point redevelopment profiled on PBS' *Edens Lost and Found*, giving recognition to signature green projects across the country

*“The High Point redevelopment is a wise investment in our future; it will provide affordable housing opportunities, create a vibrant livable neighborhood, and set an example of innovative environmental stewardship.”*

**Mayor Greg Nickels**

### Phase II:

**2006-07** • Phase II deconstruction and demolition will start • Construction includes 256 low-income rental homes, 160 market-rate apartments for seniors, and 395 homes for sale • Expansion of Sylvan/Morgan corridor into a pedestrian-friendly boulevard • Ribbon cutting on new community central park.

**2008** • Construction of mixed-use neighborhood commercial center with 100 market-rate rental units combined with local retail and community services

**2009** • Full redevelopment complete, totaling nearly 1,600 homes—achieving the vision of a newly integrated community within High Point's Delridge neighborhood

**2005  
NOV  
11**



Phase I nearly completed.

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